

Executive Registry

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REMARKS OF WILLIAM J. CASEY

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

AT

LA SALLE UNIVERSITY TESTIMONIAL DINNER

IN HONOR OF THE LATE ROBERT C. AMES

LA SALLE UNIVERSITY
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

THURSDAY, 11 DECEMBER 1986



B-801-15

CR P-309-15

IT'S A GREAT PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO BE HERE WITH YOU BROTHER PATRICK, MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND GUESTS OF LA SALLE UNIVERSITY, AND, IN PARTICULAR, MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF ROBERT C. AMES. I OFFER MY GRATITUDE ON BEHALF OF ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN LA SALLE IN PAYING TRIBUTE TO BOB AMES.

I AM PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO YOU BROTHER PATRICK, NOT ONLY FOR THE TESTIMONIAL DINNER AND THIS HANDSOME BRONZE PLAQUE, BUT FOR HOLDING THE SYMPOSIUM ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES. NO ONE SHOULD EXPECT THAT A SINGLE DAY'S DISCUSSIONS CAN PRODUCE SATISFACTORY ANSWERS TO THE VEXING PROBLEMS IN THAT REGION, BUT IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST THE PARTICIPANTS RAISED SOME OF THE RIGHT QUESTIONS. IN ANY CASE, NO WORTHIER COMPLIMENT CAN BE GIVEN THE MIND OF BOB AMES THAN TO ASSEMBLE THE BEST TALENTS AVAILABLE TO FOCUS THEIR INTELLECTUAL ENERGIES ON TOPICS THAT COMMANDED HIS ATTENTION.

IN ADDITION, I WISH TO THANK YOUR STAFF FOR THEIR COURTESY AND COMPETENCE IN ARRANGING TODAY'S EVENTS AND WELCOMING ALL THESE VISITORS FROM WASHINGTON. MEMBERS OF MY STAFF ARE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE ROLE OF YOUR ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI EDWARD TURZANSKI.

FIRST, LET ME SHARE WITH YOU TWO LETTERS I'VE BROUGHT FROM WASHINGTON. THEY ARE ADDRESSED TO BROTHER PATRICK AND THEY WERE WRITTEN AND SIGNED BY TWO OF THE STRONGEST AND MOST FERVENT FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS OF BOB AMES.

AT CIA, MOST OF US WHO KNEW BOB AMES REGARDED HIM AS ABOUT THE CLOSEST THING TO THE IRREPLACEABLE MAN BECAUSE HE NOT ONLY HAD GREAT KNOWLEDGE, BUT EXCEPTIONAL POISE AND AN AUTHORITATIVE PRESENCE. AS SECRETARY SHULTZ HAS POINTED OUT, HE HAD PERHAPS THE KEENEST INSIGHTS INTO THE ARAB MIND OF ANY INDIVIDUAL IN GOVERNMENT, AN ASSET WHICH, WHEN COMBINED WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA, MADE HIM A VERY SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR IN WASHINGTON. HIS WARM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANY ARAB RULERS--SO CRITICAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE REGION--HELPED GUIDE OUR POLICIES IN THIS ENORMOUSLY COMPLEX AND TROUBLED PART OF THE WORLD. AND, THAT "CAN-DO" SPIRIT THAT SECRETARY SHULTZ MENTIONED HELPED KEEP U.S. POLICY DYNAMIC AT A TIME WHEN HOSTILE FORCES IN THE AREA CONSPIRED TO DRIVE US OUT.

THESE QUALITIES MADE BOB JUST AS COMFORTABLE SITTING CROSS-LEGGED IN THE ARABIAN DESERT WITH BEDOUIN SHAYKHS AS HE WAS IN THE WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING PRESIDENTS. HE HAD ENOUGH CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF AND HIS JUDGMENTS NOT TO WORRY ABOUT HIS "IMAGE," WHICH HELPS EXPLAIN WHY, IN RETROSPECT, HIS IMAGE IS SO IMPRESSIVE.

WHILE THAT CONFIDENT IMAGE REFLECTED ON KINGS AND PRESIDENTS, ITS IMPACT WAS ALSO FELT BY BOB'S COLLEAGUES IN CIA. YOUNG PROFESSIONALS REMEMBER HOW QUICKLY BOB SOUGHT THEM OUT TO WELCOME THEM AND TO OFFER READY WORDS OF ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT. OLDER HANDS REMEMBER HOW EFFORTLESSLY BOB WOULD COME TO THEM TO TRY OUT HIS IDEAS AS WELL AS TO ELICIT NEW THOUGHTS. BOB WAS EQUALLY AT EASE IN HIS INTELLECTUAL SURROUNDINGS IN THE AGENCY. ALWAYS ATTUNED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTOCOL AND STATURE IN THE ARAB WORLD, AT HOME HE NEVER LET AN EMPLOYEE'S RANK OR AGE STAND BETWEEN HIM AND A GOOD IDEA OR AN ENCOURAGING WORD.

ONE OF HIS CLOSEST COLLEAGUES AT THE AGENCY BELIEVES THAT THIS POISE AND PRESENCE--AS WELL AS BOB'S PERSEVERANCE--WERE INITIALLY DEVELOPED DURING HIS YEARS AT THIS UNIVERSITY. SHE REMEMBERS HIS FOND AND GRATEFUL ATTITUDE TOWARD LA SALLE. HE TALKED TO HER MANY TIMES ABOUT HOW MUCH HE HAD GAINED FROM HIS EXPERIENCES THERE THAT HELPED HIM IN HIS CAREER. HE FELT THAT AS A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL TEAM HE HAD LEARNED HOW TO MANAGE PRESSURE SUCCESSFULLY, HOW TO DEAL WITH LOSSES AS SETBACKS, NOT DEFEATS, AND HOW TO GIVE THAT EXTRA MEASURE WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE ALREADY AT 100 PERCENT EFFORT.

MOREOVER, EVERYONE WHO WORKED WITH BOB FELT HE WAS A REAL TEAM PLAYER, AND THAT TOO MUST HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AT LA SALLE. HE WAS QUICK TO GIVE OTHERS CREDIT EVEN WHEN MUCH OF THE WORK WAS HIS. HE WORKED TO CULTIVATE THE STRENGTHS OF OTHERS, AND WAS ALWAYS OPEN TO THEIR IDEAS. HE ACCEPTED CRITICISM WITH GRACE AND HANDED IT OUT GENTLY.

AND AS A GREAT TEAM PLAYER I THINK BOB AMES WOULD BE PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT THE PLAQUE LA SALLE HAS DESIGNED TAKES NOTE OF HIS "COLLEAGUES" WHO FELL WITH HIM THAT AWFUL DAY IN BEIRUT. SOME OF THESE AMERICANS WERE FELLOW AGENCY EMPLOYEES. ON A WALL IN THE CIA HEADQUARTERS BUILDING ARE STARS HONORING AGENCY PERSONNEL WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY. A BOOK OF HONOR BELOW THE STARS DISPLAYS THOSE WHOSE NAMES IN DEATH CAN BE REVEALED, AND BOB IS AMONG THEM. BUT THE NAMES OF CERTAIN AGENCY EMPLOYEES CAN NEVER BE REVEALED, AND THEY HAVE ONLY THE STARS. SOME OF THOSE WHO DIED WITH BOB ARE IN THAT CATEGORY. BOB WOULD BE GRATEFUL THAT LA SALLE ALSO HONORS THE REST OF THE TEAM.

THIS PAST VETERANS' DAY SOME AGENCY EMPLOYEES VISITED THE GRAVE OF BOB AMES IN ARLINGTON CEMETERY. THEY LAID AT THE GRAVESTONE A WREATH MADE IN LA SALLE'S BLUE AND GOLD. THEN, KNOWING THAT ONE OF THE OTHER AGENCY EMPLOYEES WHO DIED WITH HIM WAS ALSO BURIED IN ARLINGTON, THEY FOUND THAT GRAVESTONE

TOO AND LEFT A RED ROSE. FOR BOB AND THOSE UNITED WITH HIM
IN DEATH, THE WORDS (OF THE POET, LAURENCE BINYON) OFTEN RECITED
ON VETERANS' DAY SEEMED FITTING:

THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD,
AS WE THAT ARE LEFT GROW OLD:
AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM,
NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN.
AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN
AND IN THE MORNING
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

THANK YOU, LA SALLE, FOR REMEMBERING THEM WITH US.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 3, 1986

Dear Brother Patrick:

I congratulate the officials, alumni, students, and friends of La Salle University as you gather to pay tribute to the memory of a distinguished alumnus and truly superior public servant, Robert C. Ames.

There can be no sadder and yet no more fitting duty for a President than to honor Americans who have given their lives in the service of their country. The grief I felt on that rainy Saturday evening in April 1983, when the flag-draped coffins bearing the remains of Bob Ames and his companions reached Andrews Air Force Base, is still with me. So, too, is my anger at the senseless brutality of those whose violent act took the lives of our countrymen.

The world is complex and the Middle East especially so. To know the Middle East as well as Bob did, and to give proper and eloquent advice to those of us who relied so much upon him, required a rare kind of wisdom.

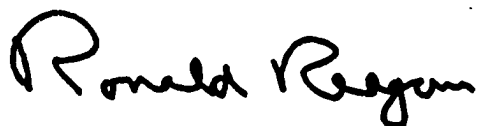
More than that, Bob and those other gallant Americans exemplified in both life and death a deep sense of purpose. They recognized the danger they faced, and yet they went willingly to Beirut. Bob, in his special role, like the others in theirs, tried to assist people who look to this country believing in America's sense of justice, America's fundamental decency. Quite simply, Bob and his companions were trying to keep the forces of barbarism from having their way.

La Salle's motto, I am told, is "Virtue and Knowledge." In both the ability and the dedication of Bob Ames, I cannot imagine any better fulfillment of that motto.

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It is written, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Bob Ames was a true peacemaker. We thank God for him. And we thank you, too, men and women of La Salle, for in honoring Bob Ames you rightly honor the finest traditions of your school and this Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "R" at the beginning.

Brother Patrick Ellis, F.S.C., Ph.D.
President
La Salle University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

December 4, 1986

Dear Brother Patrick:

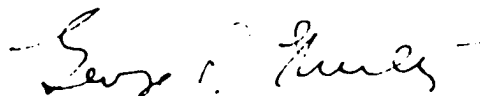
I join President Reagan in honoring the achievements of La Salle's distinguished alumnus, the late Robert C. Ames.

Bob's years of service in embassies throughout the Middle East gave him a special appreciation of the relationship between policy, diplomacy, and intelligence. This appreciation and Bob's individual talents allowed him to serve two administrations as a senior advisor. He provided major support to President Carter during the Camp David peace process, and to President Reagan in our efforts to pick up the pieces from Lebanon and fashion a peace accord in that region.

I valued his expertise on many subjects, but particularly on how Arabs think, feel, and react. These insights reflected both his extensive experience "on the ground" and careful analysis. He was always learning, and took time to keep up with the views of Middle East scholars. Those of us who relied so heavily on his wisdom could always be sure that he had considered ideas from inside and outside the government.

Beyond this we admired his indomitable spirit. I once told Bob he reminded me of the engineers at Bechtel with their "can do" approach to difficult challenges. When others were inclined to become discouraged at the difficulties of even understanding the problems in the Middle East let alone solving them, Bob kept trying, and his enthusiasm and energy rubbed off on us. In seeking to emulate that gallant, unflagging spirit Bob Ames' memory is best enshrined.

Sincerely yours,



George P. Shultz

Brother Patrick Ellis, F.S.C., Ph.D.,
President
La Salle University,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.